DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 248 276 TM 840 582

TITLE	Guidelines on the Uses of College Board Test Scores and Related Data.
INSTITUTION	College Entrance Examination Board, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	84
NOTE	16p.; Small print throughout.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Admission; *College Entrance Examinations; Guidelines; Higher Education; Scholarships; School Counseling; Secondary Education; *Student Evaluation; Student Placement; Student Recruitment; *Test Interpretation; Test Results; *Test Use
IDENTIFIERS	*College Entrance Examination Board; Scholastic Aptitude Test

ABSTRACT

How best to use college entrance test score information in making decisions that affect both students and institutions is a complex issue. This booklet offers guidelines developed by member councils and panels of the College Board on the appropriate uses of test scores. The guidelines describe how the College Board interprets its own responsibilities in relation to the public and its user clientele and what additional responsibilities it believes the users of these services have. Guidelines address schools, colleges, and scholarship agencies; and test score use for counseling, for student recruitment, for student selection (by individual colleges or by state systems or groups of colleges), and for placement and credit purposes. The booklet cautions users of test data about the limitations of tests, (including the importance of using test results along with other relevant information. Users are further advised to consider carefully the consequences to those tested and to guard specifically against using tests to serve purposes they are neither intended to serve or capable of serving. Seven examples of misuses of the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) or other College Board tests are given. (BS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED248276

SP024 465

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G. H. Hanford

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Any nonprofit organization or institution is encouraged to reproduce this publication in its entirety in quantity sufficient for its own use, but not for sale, provided that the copyright notice be retained exactly as it appears here.

Copyright © 1977, 1981, 1984 by College Entrance Examination Board. All rights reserved. The "College Board" and the acorn logo are registered trademarks of the College Entrance Examination Board. Printed in the United States of America.

Educationally sound use of college entrance test scores and related information has long been important to the College Board, which shares the public's interest in the fair use of tests and concern for educational quality and standards. How best to use test score information in making decisions that affect both students and institutions is a complex issue.

This booklet offers guidelines developed by the College Board – through its member councils and panels – on the appropriate uses of test scores. It cautions users of test data about the limitations of test results, including the importance of using test results only in conjunction with other information, such as a student's transcript and grades, in making admissions and other related decisions. The booklet also encourages users to conduct validity studies in order to determine and review the best combinations of factors in making admissions decisions. This third edition of the guidelines includes a new section on the use of College Board tests for admissions purposes by state systems of higher education or groups of colleges.

The guidelines, however, do not add up to a scientific blueprint for action applicable to every situation. For example, the College Board does not advocate the use of minimum test scores in making admissions or other decisions, but acknowledges that such use may be validated on an institution-by-institution or program-by-program basis. Each college or university must take into account what has served it best in the past and what is fair to its student applicants. The Board publishes and widely distributes this booklet as a guide for its members and others in using test-score information, but it recognizes that the ultimate responsibility for making decisions that affect students lies, in the final analysis, with the institutions themselves.

Participating in the preparation of this edition of the guidelines were the Board's councils on Access Services, Entrance Services, and College-Level Services, and its Advisory Panel on Student Concerns. The Council on Entrance Services, the current members of which are listed on the next page, had primary responsibility for the guidelines.

Council on Entrance Services

Joseph Y. Ruth, Assistant Provost for Admissions and Student Records, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., *Chairman*

Wilbur W. Washburn, IV, Executive Director, Admissions and Records, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, *Vice Chairman*

John T. Casteen, III, Secretary of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia

Gwendolyn M. Cleghorn, College Counselor and Chairman, English Department, Westminster Girls School, Atlanta, Georgia

Winston C. Doby, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, California

Phyllis M. Duffy, Director of Guidance, Chatham Township High School, New Jersey

Johnie M. Floyd, Director of Admissions, Central Connecticut State College, New Britain, Connecticut

Marilyn Jensen, College Counselor and Department Chairman, Wheat Ridge High School, Colorado

Michael J. Kloeck, College Board Student Representative, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Betty L. Lewis, Senior Counselor, Samuel Houston High School, San Antonio, Texas

James J. Mager, Director of Admissions, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Thomas F. McDonald, Vice Chancellor, Student Services, University System of Georgia, Atlanta, Georgia

Daniel J. Murray, Director of Admissions, Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota

M. Susana Navarro, Director of Research, Higher Education Project, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, San Francisco, California

Nicholas A. Nittler, O.S.B., Director of Guidance, Mount Michael High School, Elkhorn, Nebraska

Don C. Palermo, Director of Admissions and School Relations, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas

Francisco D. Sanchez, Jr., Superintendent, Albuquerque Public Schools, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Tina Segalla, Director of Admissions, Emmanuel College, Boston, Massachusetts

Guidelines on the uses of test scores and related data

These guidelines are addressed to all those who use College Board tests and related data or who are otherwise concerned about their use. They describe how the College Board, as sponsor of test services, interprets its own responsibilities in relation to the public and its clientele of users and what additional responsibilities it believes the users of these services have. The guidelines also state the conditions the Board regards as appropriate for the several uses of its tests, call attention to certain practices it regards as inappropriate, and set forth the procedure to follow in questioning the use of test scores and related data.

1. The College Board should:

1.1 Adhere to the highest standards in the development and administration of its tests and related services, giving careful attention to such generally accepted standards as those embodied in *Standards for Educational and Psychological Tests and Measurements* (1974), promulgated by the American Psychological Association in association with the American Educational Research Association and the National Council for Measurement in Education.

1.2 Provide those who use its testing services – counselors, admissions officers, school and college faculty members and administrators, and test takers themselves – with full information about the purposes and nature of the services.

1.3 Advise educational institutions and agencies about what its tests and related services are designed and able to do for them and their students or clients and, correspondingly, what responsibilities and capabilities they should be prepared to exercise if they use such services.

1.4 Assure appropriate use of its tests and related services by maintaining test instruments that are current and relevant to the domains they measure, publishing information essential to understanding and using the services properly, communicating and consulting on a regular basis with using institutions and agencies, and following up instances of known or reported misuse with advice and assistance to the users in question.

1.5 Assure the appropriateness and fairness of its tests through the engagement of faculty members, at both secondary and postsecondary levels as appropriate, in the construction and review of the tests and through periodical surveys of curriculum content in educational institutions.

1.6 Achieve fairness and sensitivity to the concerns of minorities, women, and other subgroups of the test-taking population through special reviews of test questions.

1.7 Maintain for each of its test programs procedures for seeking advice and criticism from program users, students as well as institutions, about the quality and adequacy of the services provided.

1.8 Maintain effective procedures for protecting the privacy of individual test takers, releasing information that serves to identify them only with their consent.

1.9 Respect the interests of educational institutions, state departments of education, and consenting groups of institutions or agencies, releasing identifiable summary or aggregated data pertaining to them only to people explicitly authorized to receive such information.

1.10 Maintain effective procedures for verifying the scores of test candidates who question their accuracy and for responding with care to candidate queries or complaints about particular test questions or test administration procedures.

2. Schools, colleges, and scholarship agencies that use College Board test scores and other related information should:

2.1 Assign responsibilities involving test use to people knowledgeable about educational measurement, including current literature regarding the purposes, content, statistical characteristics, capabilities, and limitations of any test in use or under consideration.

2.2 Provide those who may have occasion to take tests with full information about them, including why and when they are required or available and how the information they yield will be used.

2.3 Protect the privacy of test candidates by treating confidentially, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, scores and other information derived from tests they take.

2.4 Make use of College Board scores and related data with discretion and only for purposes they are capable of serving.

3. When College Board tests are used for counseling purposes, counselors should:

3.1 Advise counselees on what tests they may need to take in pursuing their educational objectives, when and where they might conveniently take the tests in view of institutional requirements, testing schedules, and their own personal schedules, and how they can most constructively interpret their scores in their own best interests.

3.2 Explain the limitations as well as the capabilities of tests: that tests, like all measuring devices, are not perfectly precise and should not be treated as though they are; that admissions test scores are useful as one means of predicting academic performance in college but are not infallible predictors and should be considered along with other relevant information.

3.3 Inform students that admissions test scores are intended to be used and are used by most colleges in conjunction with secondary school records and other relevant information, with the scores providing a useful uniform measure for all students in contrast to school records, which are based on widely varying grade standards.

3.4 Release the scores and other information derived from a test a counselee takes only with the counselee's consent if the released information could serve to identify him or her.

4. When institutions use College Board tests and related data in conjunction with other information for recruiting purposes, as in the case of the Student Search Service, they should:

4.1 Seek to recruit only those students they are capable of serving well.

4.2 Identify the source of the information (e.g., the College Board's Student Search Service) at the time they first communicate with prospective applicants.

4.3 Use the information only for their own recruiting purposes, consistent with assurances given to test candidates by the College Board.

4.4 Provide prospective applicants with relevant information about the institution, including its environment, students, and programs; the opportunities it provides for financial assistance and for placement and/or credit by examination; and the qualifications required for special academic programs.

4.5 Provide prospective applicants with relevant and helpful information about the characteristics of enrolled students and recent graduates.

4.6 Publicize admissions requirements, procedures, and deadlines as they relate to College Board services and ensure that such materials are readily available to prospective applicants.

5. When colleges use College Board tests for selection purposes, the responsible officials or committee members should:

5.1 Know enough about tests and test data to understand their proper use and their limitations.

5.2 Consider test scores and related data from the College Board's Admissions Testing Program as supplemental to the secondary school record and other information about applicants in assessing their ability to undertake college-level studies, recognizing that a combination of predictions is almost always better than a single prediction.

5.3 Validate data used in the selection process regularly (e.g., every three years) to ensure their continuing relevance, using if desired the Validity Study Service of the College Board, which is available without charge.

5.4 Take into appropriate consideration predictions of performance for applicant subgroups – men and women, ethnic groups, foreign students, curricular groups, adults – in developing equitable admissions policies and practices.

5.5 View admissions test scores as current and approximate indicators rather than as fixed and exact measures of a student's readiness for college-level work.

5.6 Maintain adequate procedures for protecting the confidentiality of test scores and other admissions data.

6. When systems or groups of colleges use College Board tests for selection (admissions) purposes, the officials responsible for the group or system should:

6.1 Know enough about tests and test data to understand their proper use and their limitations.

6.2 Collect and consider recent admissions validity data for each individual institution in the group or system and conduct appropriate validity studies for the system or group as a whole, or for major subgroups.

6.3 Consider test scores in conjunction with information about the secondary school record and other information about applicants in assessing their abilities to undertake college-level studies, recognizing that a combination of predictors is almost always better than a single predictor.

6.4 Conduct appropriate studies to ensure that uniform standards can apply and are appropriate to the populations of students served and to the missions of the colleges.

6.5 Take into appropriate consideration predictions of performance for applicant subgroups in developing equitable admissions policies.

6.6 Request that individual institutions validate data used in the admissions process and conduct appropriate system or group studies regularly (e.g., every three years) in order to ensure the continuing relevance and appropriateness of the information used in the combinations established for the admissions policies.

6.7 Before determining the admissions policies to be adopted for the group or system of colleges, allow sufficient time and opportunity for representatives of the individual institutions to consider and discuss possible policies and to suggest alternative policies, especially as these relate to their institutions.

6.8 When introducing or revising admissions policies, allow sufficient lead time and provide considerable notice to schools and students, so they can take the new policies into account when planning school programs and curricular offerings.

7. When colleges use College Board tests for placement and credit purposes they should:

7.1 Determine the appropriateness of particular tests through consultation with faculty members familiar with their content.

7.2 Set standards appropriate to the performance levels and ranges of their enrolled students.

7.3 Accept the transfer of credits by examination when scores meet their own standards.

7.4 Publicize their placement and credit policies, making clear which tests are used, how students gain access to them, what scores are required, how much credit may be awarded for each examination, whether credits granted meet degree requirements, and how much credit altogether may be obtained.

7.5 Identify as such the credits granted by examination on students' records and transcripts.

7.6 Base fees, if any, for credits awarded by examinations on the actual costs involved in providing this avenue to credit and not on instructional costs or other unrelated costs.

Avoiding the misuse of test scores

Abiding by the foregoing guidelines will help ensure that test scores and related data are used appropriately and defensibly from an ethical and technical standpoint. Since the decisions and judgments that test scores influence may have significant personal and social consequences, however, every care should be taken to avoid practices involving the use of scores that might turn tests from aids to informed judgments and decisions into instruments of injury and injustice. When tests are used properly, the result should be decisions that are better in significant respects than they would have been without the influence of the scores.

The Council on Entrance Services of the College Board has found that while a few specific uses of tests meet with either universal approval or disapproval, most can be counted on to provoke at least some debate about their merits or flaws. The disagreements sometimes turn on differences in the specific circumstances that may accompany a particular practice. Judgments about the use of test scores to screen applicants, for example, may be influenced by such considerations as how valid they are as predictors, how feasible it is to use other information instead of or in addition to the scores, how many applicants can be accepted by the school, and whether qualified students might be screened out by a minimum score level. Even when all the details of a given practice are held constant, however, there are sometimes honest differences of opinion about the essential rightness or wrongness of the practice. The technical issues raised are ultimately likely to be of less significance than questions of public policy and institutional prerogatives.

The Council has concluded that the most helpful advice it can offer users anxious to avoid unjust or otherwise injurious practices is to consider carefully the consequences of any test on those tested and to guard specifically against using tests to serve purposes they are neither intended to serve nor capable of serving. The following are examples of uses that should be avoided:

1. Using the SAT as a measure of the overall performance either of teachers or of schools.

2. Encouraging the belief that the SAT or other College Board tests measure a person's worth as a human being.

3. Using test scores as the sole basis for important decisions affecting the lives of individuals, when other information of equal or greater relevance and the resources for using such information are available.

4. Using SAT or other College Board test scores in ways that are not based on appropriate consideration of their validity.

5. Providing inadequate or misleading information about the actual influence of test scores on particular judgments or decisions.

6. Requiring or recommending that certain tests be taken when the scores are actually not used at all or are used to a negligible extent.

7. Interpreting the scores on any test without regard to the standard error of measurement.

The College Board

The College Board is a national, nonprofit association with a membership of approximately 2,500 colleges and universities, secondary schools, and education associations and agencies. These members elect a 25-member Board of Trustees that governs the College Board. The Board's policies and services are guided by many advisory councils and committees that annually involve several hundred educators representing secondary and higher education from all parts of the country.

In addition to the College Board's central office located in New York City, there are regional offices in every section of the country. Staff in these regional offices work closely with schools, colleges, and state agencies and conduct a wide range of activities in support of College Board programs. The regional offices are listed on the following page.

Writing the College Board

Comments, complaints, inquiries, and suggestions about the use of College Board test scores and related information are welcome and should be addressed to the appropriate College Board regional office:

Middle States Regional Office
Suite 410
3440 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

Midwestern Regional Office
Suite 605
500 Davis Street
Evanston, Illinois 60201

New England Regional Office
470 Totten Pond Road
Waltham, Massachusetts 02154

Southern Regional Office
Suite 200
17 Executive Park Drive, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Southwestern Regional Office
Suite 922
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Western Regional Office
Suite 480
2099 Gateway Place
San Jose, California 95110

Denver Office
Suite 705
4155 East Jewell Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80222

West (also includes Alaska and Hawaii)
Southwest
Midwest
South
Middle States
New England